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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 15, 2021.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize June as National Dairy Month.

National Dairy Month began as National Milk Month in 1937. Now it has developed into an annual tradition that celebrates the contributions the dairy industry has made to the world.

Milk contains nine essential nutrients which may help reduce your risk

of high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and certain cancers; yet dairy products, particularly milk, continue to be unfairly demonized.

Coming from a long line of dairy farmers, I understand the impact that this decrease in milk consumption has caused. Not only does it hurt our dairy industry, but it has also resulted in the loss of an entire generation of milk drinkers, which has negatively impacted their health.

That is why I introduced the Whole Milk For Healthy Kids Act in March of this year with the gentleman from New York, Mr. ANTONIO DELGADO. This bill addresses the importance of providing both flavored and unflavored whole milk in school cafeterias.

This builds upon the efforts from the School Milk Nutrition Act, which allows for flavored and unflavored 1 percent milk to return as an option for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

Last month, Mr. JOE COURTNEY and I led a bipartisan coalition of 55 Members of Congress from across the country in writing a letter to Secretary Vilsack of the USDA. This letter urged him to codify the efforts to continue to provide schools the option to offer low-fat flavored or unflavored milk.

Whether it is protein to help build and repair the muscle tissues of active bodies or vitamin A to help maintain healthy skin, dairy products are a natural nutrient powerhouse.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to sign on to my bill, the Whole Milk For Healthy Kids Act, during National Dairy Month and allow our students the option of consuming the type of milk that they love.

And this month, when you pour a glass of milk, enjoy a cheese board, or cool down with some ice cream, remember the hardworking dairy farmers and farm families who made that possible.

HONORING THE LIFE OF COURTNEY ANN NEALE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GARCÍA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Courtney Ann Neale, my office's press secretary and digital manager. Courtney passed away suddenly on May 23.

It is still hard to fully express how much my staff and I feel Courtney's spirit, her energy, and her strength, and we miss her. She was an activist to the core and a dedicated public servant, an untiring advocate for women, for working-class people, immigrants, and communities of color.

In the year before she joined our office, Courtney was diagnosed with several medical conditions that changed her daily life. Still, she continued her fight for a world where healthcare and education are guaranteed rights. Courtney stood strongly by her principles and—this I can tell you from personal experience—challenged those around her to do the same.

As press secretary and digital manager, Courtney was a member of my office's communication team. Now, communications on the Hill can feel a bit like a one-way street, getting the message out fast before turning to the next thing. But Courtney took the meaning of communications seriously. Even under the greatest time crunch, she seemed to approach each tweet, each press statement, as a two-way dialogue.

She not only got out our message; most mornings she would bring new messages in, raising attention to feedback on social media or local angles on national news. True to her title as a communicator, Courtney didn't just tell, she also learned and responded, ensuring that constituents were heard.

And while she was known as our office's authority on all things social media, she gracefully filled many other

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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roles in her personal life. She was an adventurous traveler; an avid reader; a doting dog mom; and beloved daughter, sister, and friend.

Despite the hectic Hill schedule, she still prioritized time with colleagues, friends, and family. Principled work was a passion, but a principled life was the goal.

So her memory is more than a legacy. It is a call to action, to take care of yourself, and take care of others as well, to give selflessly, and to savor what you have. Courtney dared to dream. She challenged us to act.

Alongside the many joyful memories she leaves with us, it is those actions that we remember. On and off Capitol Hill, Courtney helped advance the progressive cause and, through it all, remained a kind and grounded person.

As my staff and I mourn her passing, we also resolve ourselves to honor her legacy by continuing to fight for the better, fairer world that she so passionately believed in.

My prayers are with Courtney's parents, Jill and Kevin; her sister, Marissa; and the incredible network of friends she made along the way in Milwaukee, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. Rest in peace, Courtney.

OUR NATION'S CURRENT ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great concern for our Nation's current economic trajectory.

Inflation is spiraling out of control, unemployment numbers continue to disappoint, and millions of small businesses are unable to fill job openings. This pattern is increasingly alarming; and for anyone who is paying attention, it is not a surprise.

The Biden administration's plan to throw money at problems is failing the American people. This so-called rescue plan is stunting our economic recovery and impeding our Nation's comeback from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As President Biden makes even more plans to squander our taxpayer dollars, prices are skyrocketing. American families are experiencing this firsthand. As they see every day, the staggering 5 percent increase in inflation is affecting nearly everything, including essentials. Together, food and energy prices have increased nearly 4 percent. And with the current cost of materials, not even the kitchen sink is safe.

At home in Pennsylvania, no one is shocked that gas is more than 50 percent more expensive today than a year ago. Our Commonwealth already has one of the highest gas taxes in the Nation, burdening workers and families alike. We cannot afford to keep paying more at the pump.

For hardworking families in Pennsylvania and around the country, the cost

of inflation is real. It is real at the grocery store. It is real at the gas pump. It is real at the hardware store and at the local diner. It is real for every Pennsylvanian every day of the week.

As a nation, we cannot ignore the sound and source of this alarming trend. This is rooted in President Biden's and the Democrats' broken economic agenda. From higher taxes and fewer jobs, to more regulations and burdens on American industries, their plan is not working.

Day after day, we see more evidence of this. Just last week, the developers of the Keystone pipeline stopped this project after the Biden administration effectively eliminated its opportunity to succeed. Not only will this decision hinder America's energy independence and security, it is also killing family-sustaining jobs for American workers.

The Biden administration already killed the pipeline. What will be next?

As inflation rises, the unemployment rate remains disappointingly high and our work force is suffering. This should be a major warning to all of us that we must stop this trend now. We cannot afford to stay entrenched in President Biden's 1970s-era economic crisis.

We must advance pro-work, pro-growth solutions that will jump-start America's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and it starts with getting Americans back to work, supporting our small businesses, and strengthening the workforce. It also requires ending the current administration's infatuation with Big Government intervention.

The American people don't want more of the same. We simply cannot afford more of it. This is a time to invest in American workers, to promote the dignity of hard work, and restore our Nation to the path of recovery.

NATIONAL DAIRY MONTH

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate a truly essential industry at home in Pennsylvania and around our country.

Dairy farmers go to work every day of the year to produce safe and healthy food for all American people. Despite mounting regulations and obstacles, these hardworking men and women continue to persevere.

Dairy products, including nutrient-rich whole milk, are good for our kids and good for our families, and they are essential for our region's economy.

I have the distinct privilege of representing nearly 20 percent of Pennsylvania's dairy farms, which are home to more than a quarter of our Commonwealth's dairy cows.

This robust industry is a key part of our local community and our economy. It is truly my privilege to stand up for dairy farmers and to serve as their voice here in Congress as we seek to eliminate barriers to the dairy industry's success.

As we mark National Dairy Month, I thank dairy farmers in Pennsylvania and across the country for their stead-

fast dedication to our communities and to American families.

HIGHLIGHTING THE STAFF OF MANCHESTER VA MEDICAL CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the incredible efforts of the staff at the Manchester, New Hampshire, VA Medical Center, who worked long hours to resolve a massive backlog of unpaid medical claims for community care.

In a district where veterans travel long distances to get to a VA facility, community care has been a game-changer for vets to receive the services they need closer to home. But in the early years of the Choice Act, and now the Mission Act, provider payment delays and bureaucratic errors threatened the stability of community care networks and, ultimately, the access to critical lifesaving care for veterans.

One of the first providers who contacted our office was an acupuncturist who provides care to veterans experiencing PTS and debilitating pain. The acupuncturist was passionate about caring for those who served, but the chronic billing delays were creating severe uncertainty and financial hardship for her office.

She introduced me to a group of veterans that she cares for in her office to learn a little bit more about their experience. They all had a remarkable story about how their quality of life had improved since accessing these services through VA community care. But they understood that payment delays could disrupt that.

Countless other providers, including large hospital systems and small care organizations, were also caught up in this claims backlog. The VA was making it difficult, if not impossible, for many of these providers to continue serving veterans.

The issue of unpaid claims was compounded in the Northeast region by VA's multiple transitions between third-party administrators over the last few years. It created confusion and frustration in both the provider and the veteran communities.

I knew we couldn't let our veterans down, and that is why I am so thankful for the efforts of the community care team at the Manchester VA for working with our office, with providers, as well as the third-party billers to thoroughly address this issue.

Our office worked closely with the leadership at the Manchester VA Medical Center and the New Hampshire Hospital Association and its members. A plan was developed to painstakingly delve into the minutiae of the claims backlog, line by line, so that providers could be paid for legacy claims and receive timely payments for future services.